

DATE: xx/xx/07

TO: Bob Bissell, Federal Insurance and Mitigation, FEMA Region VII

FROM: Jaime G. Martinez

SUBJECT: USDA Disaster Assistance Programs

USDA disaster assistance programs are activated under one of three processes, a Presidential declaration when C-G categories are available through public assistance, by a declaration from the Secretary of Agriculture, or ad hoc programs which require legislative acts and funding. Additional assistance programs are ongoing but may require funding.

Programs that are initiated by a Presidential declaration with C-G categories are: Emergency Loans, Emergency Food Assistance, Food Distribution, and Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants. The responsible agency will then activate and support the program as authorized. Additionally, there are a number of programs which can be initiated by the Secretary of Agriculture when it is determined by the Secretary that an emergency exists; however, appropriation of funds may be needed before the program is implemented.

Ad hoc programs include the Crop Disaster Program and Livestock Assistance Program which provide compensation for losses. The need for these types of disaster assistance programs are initiated at the county committee level, forwarded to the state office, then brought to the attention of the Secretary of Agriculture who would seek legislative action and funding for assistance programs. Under the current Emergency Programs for Disaster Assistance (2003-2005) the Crop Disaster Program requires that producers suffer a minimum of 35-percent crop loss or 20-percent quality loss due to natural disasters or drought in 2003 or 2004 to be eligible. The Livestock Assistance Program provides assistance to producers for losses in either 2003 or 2004, not both; in a county that has received a disaster designation by the President or the Secretary.

The following is a list of USDA Disaster Assistance programs and how they are activated based on the Recovery Function to the Federal Response Plan, January 2003.

The following abbreviations are used throughout this matrix:

Presidential declaration (PD)	individual/family (I)
available without declaration (AWD)	nonprofit organization (N)
Federal agency (F)	Indian Tribe (T)
State agency (S)	business (B)
locality (L)	not provided (N/P)

Program	Agency	Assistance Provided	Activating Mechanism	Eligibility
Emergency Haying and Grazing	Department of Agriculture (USDA), Farm Service Agency (FSA)	Emergency authority to harvest hay or to graze land devoted to conservation and environmental uses under the Conservation Reserve Program.	AWD	I/B
Emergency Loans	USDA, FSA	Low-interest loans to family farmers and ranchers for production losses and physical damage.	PD; designated by Secretary of Agriculture or Administrator, FSA (physical losses only)	I/B
Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program	USDA, FSA	Direct payments to reduce financial losses resulting from a natural disaster that causes production loss or prevents planting of crops grown commercially for food or fiber, for which Federal crop insurance is not available.	AWD	I
Emergency Conservation Program	USDA, FSA	Cost-share payments to rehabilitate farmlands damaged by natural disasters and to carry out emergency water conservation or water-enhancing measures during times of severe drought, in cases when the damage or drought is so severe that Federal assistance is necessary.	AWD	I/B
Agricultural Marketing Transition Act (AMTA) Program	USDA, FSA	Direct payments to eligible producers of program crops that comply with AMTA requirements.	AWD	I/B

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	USDA, FSA	Voluntary program that offers annual rental payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost-share assistance to establish approved cover on eligible cropland.	AWD	I/B
Farm Operation Loans	USDA, FSA	Loans and loan guarantees to be used for farm operating costs.	N/P	I
Farm Ownership Loans	USDA, FSA	Direct loans, guaranteed loans, and technical assistance for farmers in acquiring or enlarging farms or ranches; making capital improvements; promoting soil and water conservation; and paying closing costs.	AWD	I
Emergency Food Assistance (Emergency Food Stamp and Food Commodity Program)	USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)	Direct payments to States for specified uses.	PD; declaration by the Secretary of Agriculture	S/I
Food Distribution	USDA, FNS	Donations of USDA-purchased food.	PD; declaration by Secretary of Agriculture and compliance with eligibility criteria	F/S/L/N
Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)	USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Direct payments and technical assistance to install structural and nonstructural measures to relieve imminent threats to life and/or property, and to purchase floodplain	AWD; triggered by NRCS State Conservationist	S/L/N/B/I

		easements. Technical assistance such as site evaluations, design work, and installation inspections also are provided through the program.		
Water Resources	USDA, NRCS	Project grants for the installation of pre-ventive measures such as dams, channels, flood warning systems, purchasing easements, floodplain delineation, and land treatment. Advisory and counseling services also are available.	N/P	S/L/N
Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)	USDA, NRCS	Technical assistance and loans to finance local project costs. Projects may include land and water conservation, resource improvements, recreational development, and waste disposal projects.	AWD	L/N
River Basin Project	USDA, NRCS	Technical assistance. Special priority is given to projects designed to solve problems of upstream rural community flooding, water quality improvement that comes from agricultural nonpoint sources, wetlands preservation, and drought management for agricultural and rural communities. Special emphasis is placed on helping State agencies	AWD; triggered by NRCS State Conservationist	F/S/L

		develop strategic water resource plans.		
Soil Survey	USDA, NRCS	Technical assistance. Objective is to maintain up-to-date, published surveys (and soil survey data in other formats) of counties or other areas of comparable size for use by interested agencies, organizations, and individuals; and to assist in the use of this information.	N/P	S/L/N/B/I
Federal Crop Insurance Program	USDA, Risk Management Agency (RMA)	Direct payments of insurance claims. Insurance against unavoidable causes of loss such as adverse weather conditions, fire, insects, or other natural disasters beyond the producer's control.	No activating mechanism is needed, but availability is based on crop-specific sales, closing dates, and the availability of crops in particular counties	I
Business and Industrial Loan Program (B&I)	USDA, Rural Business Service	Guaranteed and direct loans up to \$10 million. Possible disaster uses include drilling wells, purchasing water, or tying into other water programs.	AWD	B/N/T and public bodies
Rural Housing Site Loans	USDA, Rural Housing Service (RHS)	Loans for the purchase and development of housing and necessary equipment that becomes a permanent part of the development (e.g., water and sewer lines).	AWD	N
Rural Rental Housing Loans	USDA, RHS	Loans for the purchase, building, or repair of rental housing. Funds can also be used to	AWD	I/S/L/B

		provide water and waste disposal systems.		
Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants (ECWAG)	USDA, Rural Utilities Service (RUS)	Project grants to help rural residents obtain adequate water supplies.	PD	S/L/N
Water and Waste Disposal Loans and Grants	USDA, RUS	Project grants and direct and guaranteed loans to develop, replace, or repair water and waste disposal systems in rural areas and towns having populations of 10,000 or less.	AWD	L/N/T